



National Park Service Overview



Leadership

Director
Vacant

Deputy Directors

Dan Smith
Lena McDowall
Rick Obernesser (Acting)

Administration

The National Park Service (NPS) is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The NPS manages the 417 parks of the National Park System.

The NPS also helps administer dozens of affiliated sites, the National Register of Historic Places, National Heritage Areas, National Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Historic Landmarks, and National Trails.

Mission Statement

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the NPS. The “Organic Act” states that the fundamental purpose of the NPS “is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Website

In-depth information is available at www.nps.gov.

The Number of Parks

The National Park System covers more than 84 million acres and is comprised of 417 sites with at least 19 different designations. These include 129 historical parks or sites, 87 national monuments, 60 national parks, 25 battlefields or military parks, 19 preserves, 18 recreation areas, 10 seashores, four parkways, four lakeshores, and two reserves.

Yellowstone National Park was established by Congress as the nation’s (and the world’s) first national park on March 1, 1872.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is the largest park with 13.2 million acres. The smallest site is the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial at 0.02 acres.

Budget

The enacted budget for fiscal year 2018 was \$3.2 billion. Annual visitor spending in communities within 60 miles of NPS sites supports more than 306,000 mostly local jobs and contributes about \$35.8 billion to the U.S. economy.

Recreational Visits

1920	1 million
1940	17 million
1960	79 million
1980	198 million
2000	286 million
2017	330 million

Visitor Services

The NPS maintains 879 visitor centers and contact stations which were visited by almost 331 million people in 2017. More than 500,000 attended special events and ranger programs. More than 660,000 children participated in the “Junior Ranger” program.

Employees & Volunteers

The NPS employs more than 22,000 permanent, temporary, and seasonal workers.

They are assisted by more than 339,000 Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs), who donate about 8 million hours annually.

Preservation

National parks contain:

- At least 247 species of threatened or endangered plants and animals.
- More than 75,000 archeological sites.
- Nearly 27,000 historic and prehistoric structures.
- More than 167 million museum items, including George Washington's inaugural coat and Carl Sandburg's typewriter.
- 18,000 miles of trails.
- The world's largest carnivore, the Alaskan brown bear.
- The world's largest living things, Giant Sequoia trees.
- The highest point in North America, Denali (20,310 feet), in Denali National Park.
- The longest cave system known to the world, Mammoth Cave National Park, with more than 400 mapped miles of caves.
- America's deepest lake, Crater Lake in Crater Lake National Park, at 1,943 feet.
- The lowest point in the Western Hemisphere, Badwater Basin in Death Valley National Park, at 282' below sea level.



Concessions

The NPS has more than 500 concession contracts at more than 100 sites. Concessioners provide visitors with food, lodging, transportation, shops, and other services.

They employ approximately 25,000 people. Gross revenues are about \$1.3 billion annually, and they pay the government \$80 million in franchise fees each year.



Partnerships

- Public support for America's national parks is a tradition as old as the parks themselves. Even before the establishment of the National Park Service in 1916, citizens stepped forward to protect special places that exemplify our national heritage.
- Thousands of public private partnerships play a crucial role in advancing the NPS mission.
- More than 150 non-profit park friends groups contribute time, expertise, and about \$50 million annually to national parks across the country.
- The National Park Foundation, the national nonprofit partner to the NPS, raises private funds to help protect national parks. The Foundation has provided millions of dollars in support to park projects and programs over the past 50 years.
- More than 70 cooperating associations enhance educational and interpretive experiences at parks by offering programs and selling park-related retail items in their shops. The associations provide about \$75 million to the NPS in annual contributions and volunteer support.



Fees

116 NPS sites charge entrance fees, which range from \$3 to \$35. The money remains with the NPS and is used to enhance visitor services and facilities.

The *America the Beautiful-National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass* is an annual pass costing \$80 that provides access to federal lands managed by five different government agencies, including the NPS.

Children under 16 are admitted to parks without charge. An \$80, lifetime Senior Pass is available for U.S. citizens 62 years and older. A free, lifetime Access Pass is offered for citizens with permanent disabilities.

Fourth graders of the 2018-2019 school year may receive a free Every Kid in a Park entrance pass, to encourage them to visit hundreds of parks, lands, and waters with family and friends.



The Future

The NPS celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2016. Continuing in its second century, the NPS remains committed to its original mission—to maintaining and protecting our national parks for the continued benefit and enjoyment of all Americans.